

APPLICANT(S): SELLARS, Robert
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REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application, and claims 16-21 and 23-35 have been withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected species but will be considered upon allowance of generic claim 1. Claims 1-15 and 22 have been rejected.

Claims 1-6, 8-9, 11 and 13 have been amended herein. Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to claims 1-6, 8-9, 11 and 13 add no new matter.

Claim 3 has been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in this claim to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

New claims 26 and 27 have been added herein in order to further define what the Applicants consider to be the invention. Applicants respectfully assert that no new matter has been added.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-15 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner stated that the following claim limitations are unclear: "at least one main roller" in claims 1, lines 9-10; "all the support rollers" in claim 4; "the holes" in claim 5, line 2; "which reduces

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in size to a minimum” in claim 6, lines 21-3; “a circlip” in claim 10; and “region or the one main roller” in claim 11, line 3.

In response, Claims 1-6, 8-9, 11 and 13 have been amended to overcome the deficiencies noted by the Examiner. The claims have also been amended to remove reference to the relative terms “above” and “below”, and consequently the housing has been defined in amended claim 1 as having first and second ends.

Applicants note that the reference in claim 10 to “a circlip” has not been amended, as Applicants believe that this term is well understood in general; and in context of this invention. Wikipedia describes a circlip as: “a type of fastener consisting of a semi-flexible metal ring with open ends which can be snapped into place, into a machined groove on a dowel pin or other part to permit rotation but to prevent lateral movement...”. Claim 10 is therefore stating that the “retaining means” is a particular type of known fastener, which Applicants respectfully submit is clear and appropriate.

It is respectfully asserted that the foregoing amendments merely address matters of form and do not change the literal scope of the claim in any way or result in any prosecution history estoppel. Applicants respectfully assert that these amendments render claims 1-6, 8-9, 11 and 13 proper under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and request that the rejections be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-15 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith (U.S. Patent No. 1,356,566) in view of Oppenheimer (U.S. Patent No. 2,687,546). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection in view of the amendments to the claims and the remarks that follow.

Applicants note that claim 1 has been amended herein to incorporate limitations that correspond generally to the limitations of claim 3, which has now been canceled (although these new claim 1 limitations are phrased consistently with other amendments made to claim 1). Although the Examiner rejected claim 3, Applicants note that there is no specific mention or discussion in the Office Action of the rejection of claim 3 or of the claim 3 limitations.

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Amended claim 1 now requires:

at least one bearing means comprising an annular member with a plurality of openings in which support rollers are located for contacting a surface part of the or each main roller, the surface part being a surface part of the roller oriented towards the second end of the housing, and wherein at least some of the support rollers are seated in the openings so that parts of their surfaces protrude further towards the first end of the housing than does the annular member in which they are located.

This feature of claim 1 relates to the structure of the bearing means, and in particular that the support rollers extend further towards the first end (downwardly, as illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2) than does the annular member. This feature is advantageous because it provides greater structural flexibility than do the bearing arrangements disclosed in those documents. In particular, it means that the annular member may be made small in diameter relative to diameter of the main roller while keeping the annular member clear of the main roller. This provides the flexibility to provide an annular member of a desired diameter, and using a relatively small diameter annular member (i.e., so that the support rollers are relatively close to the "crown" of the main roller) allows forces applied between the main roller and the second end of the housing to be directed in a direction close to the vertical, which allows effective load bearing.

This feature is not shown or suggested in either Smith or Oppenheimer. In addition, by contrast, providing a circular member which extends downwardly beyond the support rollers, as in Smith, means that if the member is made small compared to the main roller, then the member rather than the support rollers may contact the main roller leading to high friction (and possibly undue wear/damage to the components). Thus, in Smith, the diameter of the member is substantially the same as the diameter of the main roller, and this imposes undesirable design constraints which appear to be compensated for in Smith by using large support rollers and providing a correspondingly bulky housing, which does not appear lend itself to pleasant aesthetics or to economical manufacture.

The use of an annular member of relatively small diameter allows the support bearings to contact the second end of the housing at a region which is spaced considerably inwardly from the cylindrical side wall of the housing, as best shown in Figures 1 and 2, which allows more flexibility in the choice of housing shape which, in turn, allows more

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attractive and economical housing shapes to be selected. New claims 26 and 27 are directed towards these features.

Applicants assert that the combination of features now included in amended claim 1 is not disclosed or suggested in either Smith or Oppenheimer and is not disclosed or suggested by these documents in combination. Applicants, therefore, submit that the subject matter of Claim 1 is novel and inventive over these cited documents, and is patentable.

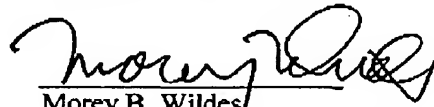
All the pending claims, namely claims 2, 4-15 and 22, depend from claim 1 and should therefore be considered patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that this rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the pending claims are allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

Please charge any fees associated with this paper to deposit account No. 50-3355.

Respectfully submitted,



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